

NEW YORK POST

MAY 27 1981

Webster takes over shaken CIA

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WASHINGTON — Backed by a pledge from President Reagan to maintain a "vigorous intelligence agency" and to uphold the law, William Webster took office yesterday as director of the CIA.

Webster, a former judge and FBI director, was sworn in by Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell in a dramatic ceremony in the

CIA parking lot.

He faces the job of rebuilding the CIA's reputation — tarnished by revelations of deep involvement in the Irancon scandal.

U.S. intelligence specialists are deeply concerned that Webster plans to dramatically cut back covert operations. The Post has learned.

Covert activities were a particular favorite of Webster's predecessor as CIA

boss, the late William Casey.

Fears that Webster would rein in the CIA were compounded over the weekend when he reportedly expressed displeasure during extensive briefings on CIA operations.

At one point he was given a list of agency code names for various operatives and government officials.

When informed that Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger has a code

name, Webster said, "Can't we just call him the secretary of defense?"

Another sign of the agency's fallen status came when the White House said Webster will not have cabinet rank as did Casey.

Reagan and Webster each made a point at yesterday's ceremony of pledging to uphold the law and keep Congress informed of covert activities.

The President, while prom-

ising never to let intelligence capability weaken, assured the public "that they have the best intelligence service in the world, and that it is staffed by honorable men and women who work within the framework of our laws and shared values."

Webster pledged to "work closely with the congressional committees which must act in secret matters as surrogates for the Congress and the American people."